

go home, and I could have gone to Chicago, like I said, which I maybe would have enjoyed more. But the way the circumstances were, I stayed home.

LH: Who told you you were going to be released? Or did you know?

SS: I heard it through the grapevine. I couldn't tell you who the first one was. And then Dottie...

LH: Dottie Hunter.

SS: Why can't I remember her name today?

TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

LH: So, do you know why you were released?

SS: To be honest, no. Nothing was ever said directly, just that I was being released. And I had my fare to go home, so that's what I did. Other than that I never did go back and ask. I went back once to visit with the kids, and... Tommy and Jo that is, more so than anybody else. And then I wished them luck and stuff, and went home. Other than that I didn't bother no more.

LH: Did they ever consider trading you to another team?

SS: If they did, I don't know about it.

LH: Was there a good reason to trade you to another team?

SS: Well, there was a team that could have used a pitcher, and why I wasn't sent there, I don't know.

LH: How many pitchers did you have?

SS: We had five, and South Bend at that time, was down to one pitcher, I don't know how many they had to begin with, but I guess they were injured or sick or something. And they had only one gal, and why they didn't send me down there I don't know. I never asked, I just took my fare and I went home. And that was that. And maybe they

didn't want me pitching against them, you know. I might have beat their buns. Just because.

LH: So right after you left the league, did you start up again in West Allis?

SS: More or less. Let's see, that was the middle of the year, more than likely, I can't say I remember exactly. But more than likely. Yes.

LH: And when did you marry your husband?

SS: May tenth, forty-seven. Yeah. We held off a little while, not much. May tenth, forty-seven we got married.

LH: So where did you work right after you left the league? When you came back home.

SS: That's a good one. I think, Gueder, Paeshke, and Frey. I think I went back there. And then for a while I worked at Trostel's Tannery until I got pregnant. I just can't remember how it went. And then for a while I didn't work. Then after Korea, I went back to work again, 'cause my husband was in service and I went to work. Or did we cover that already?

LH: But you did work right after?

SS: Yeah, oh yeah. I went to Cutler-Hammer. I'm trying to remember how this worked out, 'cause I didn't work all the time when I had the kids. And yet I did a lot of work in my lifetime. Of course I lost my husband right away, right after the third one was born. The last twenty or twenty-one years of working I worked at Briggs. I just retired back in sixty, no... ninety? Yeah, nineteen ninety I retired. But I had twenty-one years in there and then I had about eleven, that's when I worked at Cutler-Hammer... eleven years before that. After my husband passed away I didn't go to work, either, until the youngest one... I worked part time jobs, so I could take the youngest one with me. And then when she went to school full time, then I first went and got a job at Cutler-Hammer. I worked, what was it, six, seven years there and then I got into Briggs and worked the last twenty-one years there. And then I retired.

LH: You lived in Milwaukee this whole time? Or in the Milwaukee area?

SS: Milwaukee area. Well, Germantown for about twenty years, that was after my husband passed away. He died in fifty... fifty-four. We were living in Brown Deer then, at the time. And we moved... After he passed away, I had to move anyway, 'cause where we were living, that was the Brown Deer airport and the riding academy was there, and that whole track of land was sold. So everybody had to vacate. I thought I'd make out better moving back to Milwaukee, with the three kids and I had a sister living with me at the time. So we moved back to Milwaukee, and after being alone, out in the country like we were, I couldn't stand city life anymore. And I had made the mistake of buying a flat to begin with, so the noise between the... living in a home, I lived upstairs with the kids and that. People downstairs and people on either side of me, I almost went bananas. We only stayed there two years, and we moved out to Germantown, I think it was fifty-six. We lived out there for about twenty years. Maybe more than that. No, about twenty years in Germantown, and then I moved back to Milwaukee. By this time it was just my one sister and I, we looked around Milwaukee and we wanted to find a place where we both have it easy to get to work, and this one Sunday we were riding around, we find this house that I'm in now, and I liked the house, and without thinking about who had where to go to work, we bought this one. And after a month or so I asked her how far she had to go to work, and she said about five miles, and it turned out I had five miles. We would have never done it working on a map, I'm sure. It was just an accident. I've been here about fifteen, sixteen years. Something like that. One time we said we'd move out into the country again, but then somebody made me think, fine, as long as you both can drive, but once you get out of Milwaukee, there aren't buses or things like that. And if you can't drive, you don't go nowhere, you don't even go shopping, so. And when I'm talking about moving out in the country, I mean OUT in the country, where you're on your own, not in condominiums or anything. I tried that once... When I sold the house in Germantown, we moved to the condominium, it was a plush thing we were in, on their lake there and all that. But that's like moving into an anthill... to me. To most people, if you're used to living in an apartment and stuff, that's alright, but when you're used to living in a home, all by yourself, with nothing around you, and you move into an apartment, even a flat, condominium, it's too many people. You just can't handle it. At least I couldn't.

LH: So when you were out in the country, and married, and after you had some of your children, not all. Did you play baseball still, even when you were still living out there?

SS: No. Not once I hung up the glove, no. I never played organized baseball again.

LH: Not after the "two-to-three-months pregnant" incident when you were sliding into second?

SS: That was the end of it. I played catch and stuff like that, you know, but never on a team again. That was the end of it.

LH: Did your kids play baseball?

SS: My son did, he went to Little League and all that kind of stuff, but my two daughters, no. My son played some, but not too much, he was more for track and things like that. He played the baseball and the football... football mainly. But then right after high school, he went to Carroll for two years, and then he joined the Navy, and then they let him, after boot camp and all that, they sent him back to Milwaukee to finish his college, and he was at home. He was still in the Navy, but he finished off his degree at Marquette, and then he went out to another school out on the east coast. Well, that's a long time back.

LH: How do your kids feel about the fact that you played professional baseball for a year and a half?

SS: Well, they didn't make too much of it until this article came out in the paper, and now they're bragging about it to everybody. My grandsons are more surprised than anything else. Oh, they're all proud of that. They're waiting for... they're supposedly putting out cards, and they're waiting for me to get my cards so they can have it.

LH: "Ziggy" (Alma) Ziegler sent a couple to our class, the person who is interviewing her. So we've seen some of the ones that are coming out.

SS: I had sent for some, and they weren't the type of card I was hoping for, and they were mainly of the girls that played after I was in. I didn't know any of them. I think I gave those to my grandsons. Mine they didn't have made up yet. They're supposed to make them up for everybody. When this is supposed to happen, I'm not sure.

LH: But most of the cards at the time were made for the years after...

SS: I would say so. At least the group that I got. But I didn't send for anymore. I figured to begin with, they're supposed to send us our own cards, you know. I could be wrong.

LH: Did you keep up with the league after you left?

SS: No, I had no idea they continued that long. I was very surprised to find out they actually ended up playing hardball, not softball.

LH: The way they changed the rules, longer baselines, smaller balls...

SS: The longer baselines were in already, that was right away. But it was still underhand pitching. But towards the end, I believe, they were pitching overhand, and then they had the ball much smaller. They had a regular hardball. See, when we played, it was still smaller than your regulation softball, and I guess they just kept making it smaller every year, and then towards the end, they actually had it down to the hardball size.

LH: Would you have rather played more baseball, overhand pitching, or did you like the softball...

SS: I don't know. I never did that, so I can't honestly say. I suppose I'd have liked it. 'Cause them hardballs are coming at you pretty fast. Softballs can come at you fast enough to put you out of kilter, too.

LH: So, did you keep up with... keep in touch with any teammates like Jo or Tommy?

SS: No. I think I sent cards once or twice or something, you know. Once you've got kids and are into this and that, you lose track of that, you know.

LH: Did they move away after they left?

SS: Well, nobody was here.

LH: Well, at least Grand Rapids, I mean, that's not that far. Did they move back home, do you know?

SS: I don't know where any of them went, I didn't keep track, you know. I didn't have nothing more to do with them, so... Part of the past.

207 LH: Did you happen to attend any league reunions?

SS: Can't afford them. (laughs) You raise three kids by yourself, you don't put away money to go travelling around like that.

210 LH: You've heard about the exhibit in the Baseball Hall of Fame...

SS: Oh, that I did see. My son was living in New York for a while, and then one time on a visit there, then we took a ride, him and his wife and myself, my sister, I forget who else. Anyway, we took a ride down there and we did get to see the exhibit. I saw my name there.
(laughs)

LH: What did the exhibit look like?

SS: Oh, man...

LH: How large is it?

SS: Large, that's a good one. It's a great big, like in your museums, how they have a whole section like, where they had uniforms, and pictures all over the place, of women even before our time that maybe played ball, some God knows place. And they had the lists of the all names of the girls that played. What else was in there?

LH: You said that they had uniforms?

SS: Yeah, they had different parts of the uniform... they had one complete uniform in the middle. And then bats and balls, I guess they had all the balls in there to show how they downgraded them.

220 LH: Did you ever donate your uniform, or did you keep your uniform?

SS: We weren't allowed to keep them. No. That's why some of them that did get to keep them, I don't know how they did it. We weren't allowed to keep them, at least when I left, I wasn't allowed to keep anything. You didn't pay for them, you know. They were given to you. That was considered property of the league. I don't know.

233 LH: Did you enjoy the exhibit?

SS: Oh yeah, it was fun to see it, and right across from us at that time, I don't know what they got set up now, but at the time we were there, right

across from us was the big write up on Hank Aaron. You know, he had the whole space for himself, naturally. But like I said, our whole thing was in one display case, and Hank Aaron was across the aisle from us. The big shot ballplayers, they each got their own big panel like that, and then they show his rings, you know, and everything they bought. But we had all in one... all of us, you know. Namely names, they had some pictures up, but...

LH: Any pictures of you?

SS: Nope, no, no, no. I wasn't a big enough star, you know. I was just part of it. Just my name being up there, was what I figured was good enough.

LH: How did you feel about your name being in the Baseball Hall of Fame?

SS: Great! It's in the Smithsonian, too. Where else do they got it? Any place that they got hall of fames up for ball... I guess it's in Fort Worth (Fort Wayne).

LH: It's in a lot of the historical societies.

SS: Yeah. So, I said I didn't do much, but I at least got my name in there. (laughs) I wasn't the biggest part of it, but I was a part of it. Even though small.

LH: I'm sure your grandchildren want to get there to see that.

SS: Oh, they feel proud of that. And my granddaughters, even. My own kids don't make much of it as they are. It's cute.

LH: Well, "A League of Their Own" came out a few years ago. The movie. What did you think about that movie?

SS: The movie, per se, aside from the first, five minutes or so, where they show him coming in to their locker room, and doin' his thing in a... that's never happened. The rest of the movie was, more or less, at least as far as the first year is concerned, was pretty true. More or less. Give or take, you know, but... The immediate, when it started, I almost got up and walked out, 'cause I think, what are they doing here!

LH: The manager...

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SS: Yeah, that was dumb. They did have a manager that did, "fluff" the job, basically. And the gal did run the team. I found that out myself, I didn't know that. But he never walked into their locker room, and did what he did, you know.

LH: So he wasn't really a manager, one of the other players took over and managed the team, more or less?

SS: Managed the team yeah. But basically, it was pretty true. Like I said, when they first started out, like, what are they doing, c'mon! Nothing like that ever happened. But it's movies, it's gotta be dirty to get people to come in. It's ridiculous, but that's the way it is.

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LH: Did this spark any interest in you about your time playing for the league?

SS: Well, it was a surprise, because like I said, I did not follow the league, and I didn't realize that they did go as long as they did. Or that they even had an organization for them. Up until about two, maybe now it's three years that I found out about it. And the fact that they were going to make a movie, I didn't think that would ever be. I could have gone down there and been an extra, and that, but I couldn't afford the money to get down there. I could have been a part of it, but...

LH: Where was it filmed?

SS: Fort Worth.

LH: Fort Wayne?

SS: Yes. Fort Worth, Fort Wayne... I'm alright. There's nothing wrong with me. Fort Wayne, Indiana. But it cost money to go there and stay there in a hotel, so for that, I mean, I didn't have that kind of money.

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LH: So they tried to contact you?

SS: Oh, anybody could have come. As long as you were a part of it, you could have come and acted as a... in the stands or what have you. Been an extra, more or less. Certainly not play (laughs), not no more. No way, that ground's gotten awful low.

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LH: What kind of memories do you have playing for the Chicks, or playing for the League at all? Overall... good memories?

SS: Overall, oh, they were good... I mean, I had a good time. I would have enjoyed it better with a different type of uniform, you know, and that kind of stuff, and played more, but it was professional, and they were trying to run it the same way they do a men's league. I don't know if you get more tired pitching overhand or not that they got to rest two or three days or whatever. We were used to playing everyday, and I never got a sore arm. But who's to say, I don't know. It's professional and that's the way they did it. I'd love to played more, that part. Other than that, being with the team and travelling with 'em, meeting other people, it was nice. It was nice.

LH: How did you feel when it ended and you went back home?

SS: Well, I was kind of teed off with him, naturally, for not giving any reason, or not giving the chance to go on a different team or anything. But I figure, hey, that's that. Hey, you keep going forward, and that was that. You don't sit down and brood about it, it don't pay anyway. So I just went back home. And like I said, I should have gone down to Chicago, but then that turned out wrong, too, so I stayed home.

LH: Well, do you regret not going to Chicago?

SS: Well, not in a way, no. I regret not having gone down there to play, but I don't regret what I did. I got married and had kids instead. If I'd have gone down there, maybe I'd never have gotten married, I don't know. Maybe that'd been better. (big laughs) Naw, I wouldn't have given up my three kids for nothing. Life didn't treat me too good, I only had him for seven years, my husband, but I got three beautiful kids out of it, so what can I say? I think I made a good deal, myself. The way I look at it.

LH: Do you think playing for the Chicks changed your outlook or changed your life in any way?

SS: No, I don't think so. To me, I was still just playing baseball, the game I loved to do. I wish I could today, yet. That's how much I liked it. But I like to do it myself, I don't enjoy sitting and watching somebody else doin' it. I don't follow... Who do we got now, the Braves...no we don't have the Braves...

LH: Brewers.

SS: Brewers. Well, I'm fed up with them anyway, I couldn't afford to watch them if I wanted to. I feel it's all gone haywire, myself.

LH: How would you feel if they reinstated the girls' baseball league during the strike?

SS: Oh, I don't know about the strike, but they're trying to resurrect the whole league anyway because it's more open to women athletes now. And I know they are trying to get the league started up again, with new players. And where they'd play, I have no idea.

LH: What do you think will remain the same as in the forties?

SS: Oh, they'll probably play the baseball rather than the softball, I think. More than likely... I really don't know, though. But there was talk of reviving it, I forget who the big shot men that are involved with it, that want to get the league running again. I suppose they'd play the regular baseball nowadays.

LH: Do you think they'll go for the image again?

SS: I don't know if they got any brains, they'd leave the uniforms in the back ages where they belong.

LH: Do you think they've learned their lesson?

SS: I don't know. I don't know. You can be a lady and be in rags. You can put the most beautiful dress on a person, that don't make her a lady. Not in my book. The person has to be a lady to be a lady. Or a gentleman, whatever you want to put it. Clothes don't make it. They may camouflage you, but they don't make it.

LH: Would you go see the games?

SS: Oh, yeah, I more than likely would, depending where they're playing. If it ain't too far to go or something. Sure, I'd go watch them. I like to watch good sandlot games, I won't go for professional hardball, you know, baseball. It costs too much money, it's more fun to watch sandlot ball. It's just better, I don't know. Professionalism... Today they're playing for the bucks, they're not playing because they like the game. I want to watch a game... where they enjoy playing it, not because they're going to get fifty dollars or a hundred dollars for

every pitch they make or something. I want to just go watch somebody having fun playing the game, that's when it's fun to watch.

LH: Do you go to any games, any sandlot games?

SS: No, I didn't know when any of them were going on. I walked, last summer they had girls written up playing and it's supposed to be the, um, oh god... The way they had it written up it was really going to be something to see. But we did find a park, and they were playing softball, I mean, really softball, they just lobbed the ball up to the batter, and anybody, if you could swing a bat you'd be able to hit that ball 'cause of the speed it's coming in there, you know. I didn't enjoy that too much.

LH: You'd rather see faster pitch?

SS: Oh, yeah. A fast pitch. That's just lobbing, anybody can throw that up there, you know, and lob it, and everybody clobbers it, and they're running around. No, I like a good game. Fast pitch, I guess. Slow pitch didn't appeal to me at all. We went once only and that was the end of that. It wasn't what I expected, so... Other than that, I haven't been to any. I'd rather go watch my sons, my grandsons play. They're in track, now, but they always go for cross country, and I can't watch that, 'cause you go there where they start off, God knows where they're running until they come back. So you don't see too much of that either, so when they go in for the track part, I go watch track, I like to watch track.

LH: But they don't play baseball, even though they are proud of you?

SS: NOPE, NO! No, No! (laughing) No, no, not one of them! I want to shoot 'em!

LH: Are you trying to convince them?

SS: No. Yes, you can't tell somebody to do what they don't want to do. If they don't feel it, it don't pay. Matter of fact, my one grandson, at least he's collecting the baseball cards. That's the biggest interest I've seen in it, but to actually play the games themselves, no.

LH: So do you feel your role with the Milwaukee Chicks is significant?

SS: I don't think so. Not really.

LH: Why is that?

SS: Why should it be?

LH: It's popular right now.

SS: Right now because they're finally getting... they're getting more recognition now than when we were actually playing. It's a riot! I played ball because I enjoyed it, it happened to be the Milwaukee Chicks, and now they're being drummed up all over the place, but... If it helps them get another league going, I'm glad I was part of it. Other than that... Didn't do much for my life, other than that, you know, from there on in, it was just me, go to work and what have you. That didn't help me any as far as living.

LH: Helped you travel. Gave you a taste...

SS: At the time, at the time, yes. Gave me a taste for travel, that's bad!
(laughs) It gave me a taste for traveling.

LH: So do you think you have an important viewpoint on the AAGPBL?

SS: Like what?

LH: Like the fact that you don't feel it was an earth-shattering experience.

SS: At the time, I sure didn't, I mean, you're a kid. Eighteen, nineteen... Well, nowadays they're older at that age. You don't even find kids anymore, there's kids, they have to be at least five years old to be considered a kid nowadays. Anybody over seven, knows too much for their own good, but... I don't know. I don't think it was earth-shattering. We didn't shatter anybody's world.

LH: Well, it seems now that you did when you look back on it. But it didn't feel that way?

SS: Not really, I was just doing what I enjoyed doing. I mean, if people wanted to pay to watch us play ball, then fine. We used to have a nice crowd in West Allis, and we played in a lot of sandlots, I can't remember where they're all located anymore. But we always had, our stands were full. Of course it was free.

LH: So the stands were full.

SS: Always. We had a lot of people come out to watch the girls play ball. And I suppose maybe those people were the ones who came out to Borchert Field, but other than that we didn't get, you know, a crowd, not enough to support Borchert Field, I suppose, whatever.

LH: So what was the difference, in your opinion, between playing for your girls' league in West Allis and playing for the All-American Girls?

SS: For me? Well, naturally, I played more, because I played everyday. All of us did, as a team. We played together every... well we didn't play every day of the week, but we did play a lot. But whenever we played, we were all in the team, we all played, played maybe two, three times a week, something like that. But you were all together, and all played your positions, and whereas, when you played professional, well, then, you had to follow whatever they did. They played everyday, but you didn't get to play everyday, no matter who you were, except the regular, like your outfielders and that. They played everyday, but your pitching and catching staff, well they were shifted around all the time. So that was different than when we played at home.

LH: Which was more significant in your life?

SS: Oh, I think the sandlot. To me.

LH: Why is that?

SS: I enjoyed it a heck of a lot more. I don't know why, it seemed the people there meant more, they knew you already, of course we played so many years there, that could be it, too. Like I say, I was more comfortable playing well-dressed. I think that's what threw a lot of us off, 'cause in our day, to be dressed they way they had us dressed, most of us would not have appeared in public. There was too much showing. That was not modest in any sense of the word, and way back then, modesty was rather in, yet. Even girls going into the factories to work, it was kind of looked down upon to begin with, but they were doing the war effort, so it was okay. But skirts this short, and bare legs hanging out, oh my god, I mean, (whistle), we were risqué. And I think it threw a lot of us off, none of us were... I can't say none of us, I don't know, I'm sure there were quite a few that felt

fine in them, but I know there were a lot of us that didn't like the skirt uniform.

TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO

LH: How do you perceive the significance of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League?

SS: Well, now that they made a movie of it, and more people are aware that we even existed, they may pay more attention to women in sports. And if they ever do resurrect that league like they said they are trying to do, they may get better following than we got. Who knows? Like I said, when we played, nobody seemed to know about it, until this movie came out, there were people who lived in Milwaukee all their life and never heard of it. Even while we were playing, they weren't aware that it was on. Not the men, so much, 'cause most of the men were gone, but there were a lot of people that didn't know we even existed. So with the movie, I think about it out more, and more people are now aware that something like that even went on. And this only took place right here, in the Midwest, this little area, the girls came from all over, but they had no idea what was going on back home, that the league was what it was. But with the movie on, now there's other, a lot of these girls played good, on good teams in their hometowns, that were really great, but they still, weren't appreciated or with any backing to them, and this may turn things around for the girls, at least, baseball-wise. But they might pay attention to other sports, now.

LH: There is a professional baseball team in Colorado, but I hear it's only one team, but you'd think that that league might be, if they make it country-wide do you think it would be more...

SS: It would be interesting to see a country-wide league go, but I don't even know about that one.

LH: So do you feel that the All-American Girls Baseball League put women's sports on the map? In a way...

SS: Well, they maybe helped. I would say maybe Babe Dickerson, or somebody like that, that was really spectacular in their own area. I mean, that was still okay for her, but just to go out and play baseball,

no, it wasn't. So maybe this will help to get the team sport out there. I don't think they'll ever replace men's teams, no way. But at least they'll get better backing than we did in our day. I would think, anyway, hopefully. So now that more people are aware that more girls do play this game, and they play very well, so...

LH: Do you think that in reinstating a league, such as this league, that more girls will feel that they have a place in sports?

SS: Oh, I think so. Actually, even like when I first started, like I said, I was considered a tomboy. Any girl that took part in sports, was considered tomboy-ish or what have you. Yet when I finally got on the team, and I was getting paid for it, the neighborhood girls were getting sent out to the playground to learn how to play baseball. Right in my own neighborhood, so it shows the difference right there.

LH: They heard about you?

SS: Yes, getting paid for playing ball, so now their daughters could go and learn to play baseball. They'd come in a little late, but that's the effect it had, so now maybe with the whole country seeing the movie, it opened up more doors for the girls. Hopefully. It can help. I think it's a good idea. The gals will enjoy it, that like sports, you know, there's a lot of girls that do.

LH: But they're not promoted because there is no professional place for them.

SS: There isn't any place for them.

LH: Right.

SS: So hopefully they get one going, and have farm teams and stuff like the men do, it would be a big asset for the girls. If they'd ever get it going. Nobody wants to back girls, there's no money in it. Money goes where the money is. They'd rather pay some man a couple million dollars, instead of starting up some girls teams, you know. But what are you going to do about it, it's a man's world.

LH: Maybe nowadays, in the nineties, it might be a little bit more popular.

SS: Let's hope it would be.

LH: There's no guarantee.

SS: Nothing's guaranteed in this lifetime, nothing. Let's hope it does help them. And I hope that they do wear better uniforms. (laughs) I would recommend a better uniform. They can keep them sexy if they want, but keep the legs covered, so if they have to slide or what have you.

LH: No strawberries.

SS: No strawberries. That's all I got to say, other than that the uniform would have been nice, if you'd just close them here. But to play in it is something else. I believe that they should have a pants to go with it somehow. Pants, nowadays, is quite the scene. I've had aunts wearing pants, oh my god, they wouldn't have been caught dead in them years ago. I ain't changing times. So, but if you want to play baseball, you should have something on your legs. Not tights, either. They get ripped right off.

LH: Today, I'm sure that they'd have a regular baseball uniform.

SS: I would hope so. It would be much healthier for playing. But, who knows. We'll have to wait and see, I guess.

LH: Do you think it will be popular?

SS: More so than we were, 'cause it's being advertised more. I hope for their sakes it is. Where it's going to take place, I don't know, but they are trying to resurrect the league. I'm sure they'd start right back in Fort Worth (Fort Wayne) and those places, you know. A starting point, but let's hope that they could get other cities in across the nation, where all the girls could get in. Of course, we had girls from California and all over, into this league. How come they wound up right in our little area, I don't know. I was lucky. But even Canadian girls and that, so. Dottie Hunter was from Canada, there's quite a few girls from Canada. I think we had three of them, four of them on our team, who were from Canada. It was just nice, I was in the right area at the right time. Other than that there ain't much more I can add. Just lots of luck if they ever get going.